



What to Do After a Fire

Fires are very traumatic events. Most people have little experience dealing with the aftermath of a significant fire. The following information offers some assistance on what to do after a fire:

- Check with your insurance company to determine whether this type of service is covered by your policy and if the insurer will either accept billing from the restoration company or will reimburse you.
- Call your insurance carrier as soon as possible.
- Make sure to thoroughly review all possible insurance claims and don't sign releases too quickly.
- Take your time and make sure your agent knows of all your losses, if any, since it may be difficult to recall everything at once.
- When severe damages occur to buildings, it may be worthwhile to have professionals provide estimates associated with cleaning up costs.

Residual Fire Retardant

To clean fire retardant use water or a hose on surfaces with red pigment. You may notice some residual red fire retardant on your property. Fire retardant is a mixture of water, fertilizer and a red pigment. Retardant will not harm children or pets.

Lost Power and Utilities

Don't attempt to turn on the gas yourself. Gas and electricity services were shut off during the fire and will remain off until the utility company determines it is safe to restore service. APS is working to restore power to the area.

Don't run wet appliances until a professional has checked them. Damage, improper grounding or short-circuiting may cause property damage or safety hazards.

Food and Water Safety

Keep cold foods cold. Closed freezers usually keep food frozen for at least 1 day and up to 3 days. A refrigerator is less able to keep foods cool. Discard food that was held above 41°F for more than 4 hours.

Make sure water is safe to drink. Boil your water unless your water company announces that water is safe to drink.

Information regarding private wells is available at www.azdeq.gov/envIRON/water/dw/download/privatewells.pdf.

If power is unavailable, your water well will not work. Be sure to have drinking water available.

Septic Systems

If your septic system utilizes electrical pumps, do not discharge to the septic system until power is restored.

Fire and Ash Damage

Wood ash is a combination of nutrients and minerals left behind by burned wood. The ash from vegetation can be messy, but not harmful. However, ash from a home or garage that has burned may be harmful, because of chemicals and consumer products in the home or garage. Wet the ash before removing it to avoid creating a potentially harmful dust.

Wash cooking utensils, such as pots, pans and flatware with soapy water, rinse and polish with a fine powder cleanser. Clean copper and brass with salt sprinkled on a vinegar-saturated cloth.

Smoke Damage

Wash smoke odor and soot from clothing. This formula is safe for bleach-safe clothing:

4-6 teaspoons laundry detergent

1 cup household chlorine bleach

1 gallon water

Mix well; add clothes; rinse with clear water; and dry well.

NEVER mix chlorine bleach with anything other than water or laundry detergent. Chlorine bleach mixed with ammonia or other chemicals can result in toxic fumes with serious, potentially fatal results.

Propane and Household Chemicals

Ensure that propane tanks are secure and not leaking. Check to make sure the lines have not been damaged by fire. If the fire may have damaged the tank or lines, don't use the propane and call your propane service provider.

Properly dispose of household chemicals if the original containers or labels are damaged. Do not transfer chemicals to new containers.

Documents and Records

Here is a Checklist of documents you may need to replace if they are destroyed or missing.

- Birth certificates .. School records
- Passports .. Title to deeds
- Driver's licenses .. Military discharge papers
- Social Security cards .. Stocks and bonds
- Citizenship records .. Automobile titles
- Credit cards .. Warranties
- Checkbooks/statements .. Wills
- Medical Records .. Military identification
- Medical insurance cards
- Insurance policies .. Bank books
- Income tax records .. Payment books
- Marriage/divorce papers .. Animal registration papers
- Prepaid burial contracts and vaccination records

Social services and welfare clients: notify your caseworkers if identification cards for check cashing, medical care or food stamps have been destroyed. Birth/death records replacement assistance: visit www.azdhs.gov/vitalrcd/ or contact:

Arizona Department of Health Services Office of Vital Records at 602-364-1300.

Passport replacement assistance: call the U.S. Post Office at 1-800-275-8777.

For marriage/divorce records, call your county records department.

For Social Security Card information, call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

HELPFUL LINKS FOR YOUR QUESTIONS

Wildfire Support

<http://www.azdeq.gov/function/programs/wildfire.html#smoke>

Septic and Floods (ADEQ)

http://www.azdeq.gov/function/programs/download/epa_septic_system.pdf

Private/Small Public Water Systems (OC Canyon) (ADEQ)

<http://www.azdeq.gov/envIRON/water/dw/download/privatewells.pdf>

Wildfire and Flood Risks (ADWR)

http://www.azdeq.gov/function/programs/download/adwr-wildfire_insurance.pdf

Water Quality Concerns from Wildfire Fact sheet (ADEQ)

<http://www.azdeq.gov/envIRON/water/dw/download/wildfires.pdf>

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